

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-17 remain pending in the application.

The disclosure stands objected to because of certain informalities regarding inconsistency in terminology between "side panels" and "cover panels." The formalities have been corrected. Accordingly, this objection should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-4, 12 & 14 stand objected to because of certain informalities. Claims 2-4, 12 & 14 have been amended and the informalities have been corrected. Accordingly these objections should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7 & 10-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1, 6, 10, 11 & 16 have been amended to indicate proper antecedent basis, and are believed patentable. These claims are not being amended to overcome the prior art. Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 1, 6, 10, 11 & 16 overcome the indefiniteness rejections. Accordingly these rejections should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5, 7, 11-15 & 17 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Crane, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,941,617). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Internal electrical computer components (motherboard, video card, power supply, etc.) are generally housed in a chassis (referred to as an "enclosure or skeleton" by Crane Jr. et al. (col. 3, lines 61-63). This enclosure is then covered by a computer case, which further protects the inner workings of the computer and provides a minimum of aesthetics such that the circuitry of the computer is not visible from the outside. The present invention relates to a kit and method for adding cover panels over the computer case, which itself contains the enclosure.

By contrast, Crane, Jr. et al. describes a system of decorative panels for attachment directly to a computer enclosure. More specifically, Crane, Jr. et al. describes the computer enclosure as being "adapted to receive the internal components of the computer" (col. 3, lines

43-45). The decorative panels are attached directly to this enclosure, and form what in the present invention is referred to as a “computer case.”

The Examiner deems “side panels” to be elements in the “enclosure” (see col. 3, lines 61-67). However, as defined above, and as evident from the specification as originally filed, the side panels of the present invention are not part of the enclosure. Rather, the decorative panels of Crane, Jr. et al. are analogous to the side panels of the present invention. Crane, Jr. et al. does not contain any element analogous to the cover panels of the present invention.

The present invention is directed at “a method and apparatus in which a consumer, without technical skill or special tools can quickly and easily change or add a color to the computer case of their personal computer” (page 2, lines 15-18).

By contrast, the reference to fasteners in Crane Jr. et al. does not anticipate the removable nature of the plurality of elastomeric feet of the present invention. Crane, Jr. et al. describes decorative panels as being attached to the enclosure by “fasteners,” which may comprise “any appropriate fastening means” (col. 4, lines 4-9). The examples given of “appropriate fastener means” are “bolts, screws, or rivets”, where the preferred embodiment is “screws with countersunk heads.” All of these suggested fastening means are of a permanent nature, i.e. are not removable by a consumer with no technical inclination. In particular, a rivet is a permanent fixture, defined by *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* as, “A metal bolt or pin having a head on one end, inserted through aligned holes in the pieces to be joined and then hammered on the plain end so as to form a second head.” A rivet is not elastomeric, but rather permanently deformable, regardless of whether it is formed from metal or a “polymer-based” material, as the Examiner claims is known in the fastener art.

The language of independent claims 1 & 11 refers to “cover panels” for attachment to opposite “side panels of the computer case.” Crane Jr. et al. has side panels but does not disclose cover panels. The language of independent claims 1 & 11 refers to “a plurality of elastomeric feet.” Crane Jr. et al. does not have elastomeric feet.

Accordingly, for any of the reasons discussed above, claims 1-5, 7, 11-15 & 17 are not anticipated by Crane Jr. et al. and are patentable over the given reference. Accordingly, the anticipation rejection of claims 1-5, 7, 11-15 & 17 should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-15 & 17 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Korinsky et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,964,513), in view of Vincens (U.S. Patent No. 3,408,127). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The present invention relates to a kit and method for adding cover panels over the computer case, which itself contains the enclosure (referred to as the chassis in the language of Korinsky et al.).

By contrast, Korinsky et al. relates to a chassis (200) and cover (500), of which the cover includes side panels (600, 700, 800, and 900). These covering panels are analogous to the side panels of the present invention. Korinsky et al. does not contain any element analogous to the cover panels of the present invention. Vincens does not overcome the deficiency of Korinsky et al. Thus, the present invention can not be achieved with the combination of references of Korinsky et al. and Vincens. Accordingly, the obviousness rejection of claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-15 & 17 should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 6-14 & 16-17 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,947,570) in view of Johnson (U.S. Patent No. 3,803,670). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The present invention relates to a kit and method for adding cover panels over the computer case, which itself contains the enclosure.

By contrast, Anderson et al. relates to a modular enclosure (12) and side panels (86). These side panels are analogous to the side panels of the present invention. Anderson et al. does not contain any element analogous to the cover panels of the present invention. Johnson does not overcome the deficiencies of Anderson et al. Thus, the present invention can not be achieved with the combination of references of Anderson et al. and Johnson. Accordingly, the obviousness rejection of claims 1-4, 6-14 & 16-17 should be withdrawn.

Claims 8-9 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Crane, Jr. et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, for the reasons discussed above with respect to Crane, Jr. et al. Accordingly, the obviousness rejection of claims 8-9 should be withdrawn.

Claims 6, 10 & 16 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Crane, Jr. et al. in view of Johnson. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, for the

reasons discussed above with respect to claims 1, 8 & 11, respectfully, from which they depend. Additionally claims 6, 10 & 16 recite additional limitations and are patentable for the reasons discussed above with respect to claims 1, 8, & 11, as well as on their own merits. Johnson does not overcome the deficiencies of Crane Jr. et al. Thus, the invention can not be achieved with the combination of Crane Jr. et al. and Johnson. Accordingly, the obviousness rejection of claims 6, 10 & 16 should be withdrawn.

All objections and rejection having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kenneth M. Berner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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MARKED-UP VERSION SHOWING CHANGES

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 5, amend the first and second full paragraphs as follows:

In order to cover additional exterior surfaces of the personal computer, according to the present invention, a pair of plastic molded cover panels can be attached to the metal side panels 30, 32 of the computer case 20. The [side] cover panels 50, 60 would preferably be the same color as the central portion 42.

As shipped from the factory, the computer case 20 will include four small rubber feet 52 on each side panel 30, 32. If the customer chooses to purchase a color upgrade kit, the customer can change the look of their PC to match their own personal style. As previously mentioned, the central portion 42 could be removed and for the side panels [50, 60] 30, 32, the customer would remove the feet 52, add the new color plates 50, 60, over the existing side panels 30, 32 and attach the four feet 52 to each side panel 30, 32. Advantageously, using the present invention, no special tools are needed. The installation is very straight forward and easy for a customer in the field to perform. Also, advantageously the consumer can easily change the color and appearance of the computer case without special tools and with little risk of damaging the color panels.

Page 5, amend last paragraph, through page 6 and first two lines on page 7 as follows:

Several side panel configurations are required depending on the construction of the particular side panel 30, 32. For example, in Figures 2A-2C and 3A-3B, two cover panels are depicted which are identical except that the Figure 2A cover panel has a vent located in a lower central portion thereof. As depicted in Figures 2A-2C, the side panel would be used to cover the left side cover 32 and the Figures 3A and 3B cover panel would be used to cover the right side panel 30. As depicted in Figures 2A-2C and Figures 3A-3B, the exterior periphery of the cover panel is non-symmetrical relative to a horizontal center line but is symmetrical with respect to a vertical center line. Preferably, the interior surfaces of the cover panels 50, 60 conform closely to the exterior surface of the side panels 30, 32. As

depicted in Figures 2A and 3A, there is a flat central portion 62. Four through holes 64 are located at the corners of the flat central portion 62. As depicted in Figure 2A, a vent 66 is located in a lower central portion of the flat central area 62. The vent 66 would conform in size to a vent formed in side panel 32 (not shown). It may be preferable, for efficiency purposes, to use the same side panel 60 for both the right and left side color panels. This would eliminate the possibility of having the consumer install the left side panel on the right cover panel and block the vent in the side panel 30. It would also reduce the number and types of parts required for this customer upgrade. If a consumer purchases a color upgrade kit then the upgrade kit would include identical [side] cover panels 50, 60 not unique to each side. When the color panels 50, 60 are assembled there will be venting holes 66 on both sides, even though only the left side vents are functional.

Extending from the central portion of 60 is a central curved portion 70, a left curved portion 72, a right curved portion 74 and a bottom curved portion 76. Connecting the top curved portion 70 and the right curved portion 74 is a right upper corner curved portion 78. Connecting the right curved portion 74 and the bottom curved portion 76 is a lower right corner portion 80. Connecting the left curved portion 72 and the bottom curved portion 76 is a left corner curved portion 82. Connecting the top curved portion 70 and the left curved portion 72 is a left upper corner curved portion 84. Curved portion 72 and 74 are symmetrical with respect to one another.. Lower curved portion 76 does not extend outwardly from [center curved] flat central portion 62 as [does] do the rest of the curved portions. As previously mentioned, preferably the curved portions 70-84 conform closely to the shape of the side panels 30, 32. The exterior surface of the [side] cover panels [30, 32] 50, 60 are flat and the curved portions are all internal to the [side] cover panels [30, 32] 50, 60.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A kit, comprising:

a pair of cover panels for attachment to opposite side panels of a computer case, each of said cover panels having a plurality of holes and each of the opposite side panels of the computer case having a corresponding plurality of holes; and

a plurality of elastomeric feet each insertable through one of said holes in said cover panel and through the corresponding hole in the side panels of the computer case for retaining each of said pair of cover panels on the opposite side panels of the computer case.

2. (Amended) The kit of claim 1, wherein each of said cover panels is made of a plastic material.

3. (Amended) The kit of claim 1, wherein the holes of the opposite side panels are [is] covered with hole plugs.

4. (Amended) The kit of claim 1, wherein each of the pair of cover panels has an interior surface corresponding in shape to an exterior surface of each of said side panels.

6. (Amended) The kit of claim 1, wherein each of said feet has a cover portion and a pair of legs extending from said cover portion and a shoulder portion at a distal end of said legs such that when said legs are inserted into said plurality of cover panel [hole] holes and said plurality of side panel [hole] holes, said legs flex inwardly and said shoulder portions are brought into engagement with an interior surface of the side panel.

8. (Amended) A method, not requiring technical skill, of installing a color panel on a computer case, the color panel having a plurality of holes, the computer case having at least one side panel, the at least one side panel having a plurality of holes corresponding in location to the plurality of holes in the color panel, comprising:

inserting a plurality of elastomeric feet each through one of the holes in the color panel and through the corresponding hole in the at least one side panel to secure the color panel on the computer case.

9. (Amended) The method of claim 8, comprising removing hole plugs from the plurality of holes in the at least one side panel.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein each of said feet has a cover portion and a pair of legs extending from said cover portion and a shoulder portion at a distal end of said legs such that when said legs are inserted into said plurality of cover panel [hole] holes and said plurality of [the] side panel [hole] holes, said legs flex inwardly and said shoulder portions are brought into engagement with an interior surface of the side panel.

11. (Amended) A computer case, comprising:
opposite side panels each having a plurality of holes;
a pair of cover panels for attachment to said opposite side panels, each of said cover panels having a corresponding plurality of holes;
a plurality of elastomeric feet each insertable through one of said holes in said cover panel and through the corresponding hole in the side panels of the computer case for retaining each of said pair of cover panels on the opposite side panels of the computer case.

12. (Amended) The computer case of claim 11, wherein each of said cover panels is made of a plastic material.

16. (Amended) The computer case of claim 11, wherein each of said feet has a cover portion and a pair of legs extending from said cover portion and a shoulder portion at a distal end of said legs such that when said legs are inserted into said plurality of cover panel [hole] holes and [the] side panel hole [holes], said legs flex inwardly and said shoulder portions are brought into engagement with an interior surface of the side panel.